

VEGETATION & TREES

FRONT GARDENS AND LANDMARK PALM TREE REINFORCES VISTAS IN MOWBRAY



CLIMBING ROSE ENTRANCE  
ARBOUR AT BERTRAM'S HOUSE, GARDENS



APPROVALS, DEPARTURES, SUBDIVISIONS  
AND REZONINGS

In the granting of Zoning Scheme departures, subdivisions and rezonings, the City can place conditions on the protection, maintenance and retention of trees worthy of conservation. Trees affected by such applications are assessed on the basis of their impact on the landscape, species, size, health, vitality and cultural significance. The City may ask for full tree surveys, landscaping and site development plans to be submitted together with the development proposals.

TREE REMOVAL, PRUNING AND PROTECTION  
DURING CONSTRUCTION

Application to fell, lop or radically prune a tree in a declared Heritage Area, or in the vicinity of a historic building or an area which is deemed to have historic value should be submitted to the Heritage Resources Section. The City can advise on significant trees outside a Heritage Area.

THE PROTECTION OF SIGNIFICANT EXOTIC TREES

There are few indigenous tree species in the Cape that can cope with the harsh climatic conditions outside protected ravines. Over time, exotic trees, which were able to grow and thrive in a Mediterranean climate were introduced. Some of these exotic trees have been an integral part of the cultural landscape since their introduction to the Cape, in some cases, as early as the 17th century and now have heritage value. Some examples of trees that were introduced early in the history of the Cape colonial settlement and which add amenity and iconographic value to the cultural landscape of the Cape Peninsula and environs are the following: Stone Pines (*Pinus pinea*), Oaks (*Quercus sp.*), Plane Trees (*Platanus x acerifolia*), Blue Gums (*Eucalyptus globulus*), Poplars (*Populus sp.*), Norfolk Pines (*Araucaria heterophylla*), Palm Trees (*Washingtonia robusta*), Camphor Trees (*Cinnamomum camphora*).

These trees are not invasive and important groups and avenues of such trees as well as individual specimens contribute significantly to the cultural landscape of the Cape and are protected.

INVASIVE ALIEN TREES & VEGETATION

In terms of the Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (No. 43 of 1983), and the Environmental Conservation Act (No. 73 of 1989), certain invasive alien species may no longer be planted. Invasive alien species rapidly spread and invade ecologically sensitive nature reserves, water catchment areas and public open spaces. They destroy indigenous vegetation although generally not in urban areas. Some of the more common invasive alien species are: Rooikrans (*Acacia cyclops*), Black Wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*), Port Jackson Willow (*Acacia siligna*), Pampas Grass (*Coraderia jubata*) and Water Hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*).

NEW PLANTING IN HERITAGE AREAS

Gardening is enjoyed by many homeowners and their varied choices of trees and vegetation adds colour, fragrance and beauty to the gardens of the City. Mature and well-maintained gardens and street planting add significant value and character to individual properties and to the areas as whole. As a guide, when planning planting and landscaping:

- Protect and enhance the planting traditions and general patterns in the specific area which have an impact on the streetscape such as avenues, front hedges, planted pergolas and feature trees.
- Continue planting traditions such as colourful creepers on walls, fences and pergolas such as Port St. John Tecome, bougainvillea and begonias.
- Protect and retain natural features such as boulders, water courses and mature trees.
- Consider the introduction of historic gardening ideas such as entrance gate arbours, rose gardens and the planting of frangipani and hibiscus trees at entrances.
- Retain architectural features in the garden such as historic gateways and "werf" walls.
- Retain existing views between the street and the front facade of the property.

APPROPRIATE VEGETATION IN HISTORIC AREAS

Where possible, species should be selected which are most suitable to the environment. Other considerations for selection of a species are:

- hardiness and ability to withstand conditions such as wind and sun;
- ability to attract wildlife, insects and birds;
- ability to flower with colour and fragrance or bear fruit;
- ability to reflect the seasons, i.e. deciduous or evergreen (deciduous trees can bring colour and variety to the street, for example plane trees and oaks).

Care should be taken to avoid species which are known to be fire hazards, use large amounts of water, have vigorous and aggressive roots that can damage buildings or paving, shed leaves that block drains and gutters, or species that are prone to branches breaking. Where oak trees are associated with the cultural landscape, the species *Quercus robor* which is prone to disease, may be replaced with species more generally suited to the Cape conditions: Mirbecks Oak, Water Oak, Pin Oak, Turkey or Italian Holm. None of these oaks are invasive or use a lot of water. They come from similar Mediterranean climates and can stand persistent winds.

PLANTING OF TREES ALONG ROADSIDES  
& ON PUBLIC FOOTWAYS

Property owners can approach the City to apply for trees to be planted along the roadsides and on public footways. The City provides advice on appropriate species of trees and will assist owners with planning the positions of the trees. Once the trees are planted by the City, the residents are required to water and maintain them until they are fully established.

AVENUE IN SUBURBAN NEWLANDS



VINES GROWING OVER STOEP PERGOLA,  
CREATING A PRIVACY LAYER BETWEEN HOUSES & STREETS



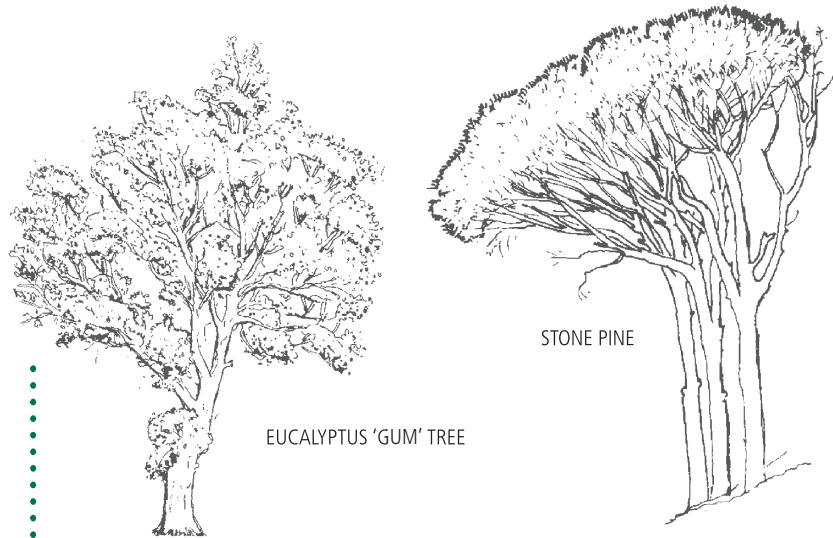
TREES AND PLANTS IN ORANJEZICHT FRONT GARDENS



TYPICAL ENTRANCE GATE  
FRAGRANT 'FRANGIPANI' SMALL TREES



THESE TWO NATURALISED FOREIGN TREES CONTRIBUTE GREATLY TO THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF THE CAPE AND SHOULD BE PRESERVED AND LOOKED AFTER FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS



EUCALYPTUS 'GUM' TREE

STONE PINE

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

If your property is situated in a Heritage Area, your building is older than 60 years or you believe it may have heritage value, it is advisable to discuss your proposals in sketch form with your Local Planning and Environment Office and particularly with the Heritage Resources Section, who will advise you about any regulations or laws that might impact on your proposed building work.

The officials of the Heritage Resources Section also advise architects and designers on appropriate designs for Heritage Areas and historic buildings. Other Heritage Advice pamphlets in this series include:

- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 1 Heritage Resources
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 2 Heritage Areas
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 3 Cultural Landscapes and Historic Vegetation
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 4 Design Guidelines for a Heritage Context
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 5 Boundary Enclosures in Heritage Areas and to Historic Buildings
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 6 Garages and Carports in Heritage Areas and for Historic Buildings
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 7 Roofs in Heritage Areas and of Historic Buildings
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 8 Security in Heritage Areas and for Historic Buildings
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 9 Langa Heritage
- Heritage Advice Pamphlet No. 10 Company's Gardens

Contact details tel. (021) 400 3912 fax (021) 425 4448 email: heritage@capetown.gov.za



TREE ALOE IN THE COMPANY'S GARDEN



PALM TREE MOSQUE IN LONG STREET



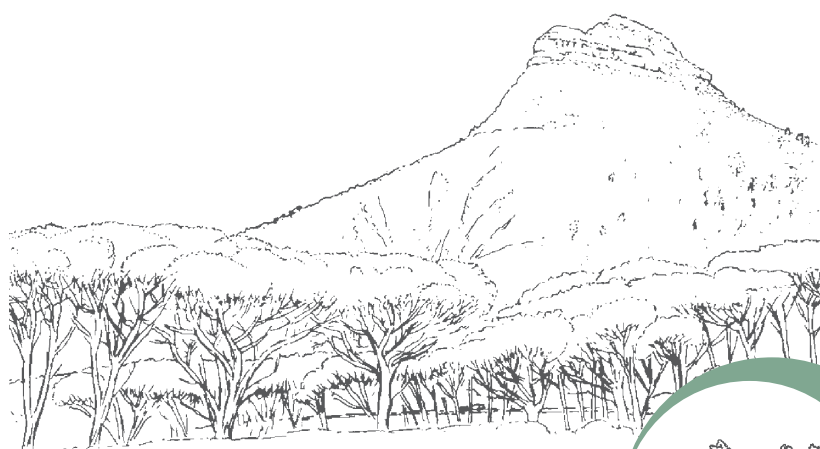
GROOT CONSTANTIA WINEFARM



LANDMARK PALM TREES IN LANGA



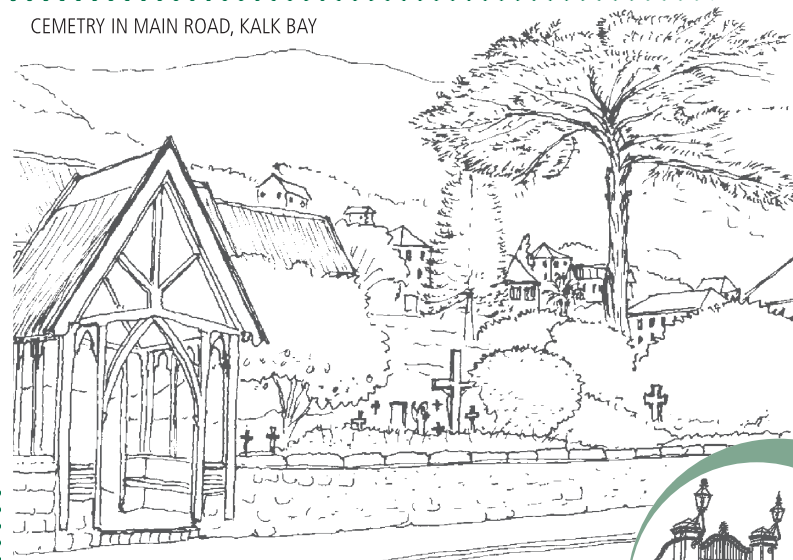
THE GLEN: STONE PINES BETWEEN LIONS HEAD & TABLE MOUNTAIN



AVENUE OF FICUS NATALENSIS AND SLATE RETAINING WALL ALONG BUITENGRACHT STREET



CEMETERY IN MAIN ROAD, KALK BAY



'WATERSLOOT' IN THE COMPANY'S GARDEN, ENTRANCE TO TUYNHUIS



GARDENS AT THE BACK OF HOUSES. A PRIVATE AND COMMUNAL GREEN ZONE



RHODES ESTATE: DESIGNED LANDSCAPE ON SLOPES OF DEVIL'S PEAK



SEATS AROUND TREE ON GREENMARKET SQUARE



VINE IN HERITAGE SQUARE COURTYARD



## INTRODUCTION

This Heritage Advice pamphlet introduces you to the concept of cultural landscapes and explains the value of historic vegetation. Cultural landscapes and historic vegetation add value to environments by enhancing the character of the historic landscape and providing a sense of place. In particular, this pamphlet focuses on the contribution made by mature plants and historic vegetation in the creation of the unique historic character of the Cape Peninsula and environs, by illustrating a sense of the passage of time and historic value, invested in the unique, diverse and dramatic landscape that we live in.

This pamphlet advises on the care that conservationists, homeowners and property developers need to take in order to protect and enhance the unique qualities created by historic patterns in the landscape.

## CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Cultural landscapes have been described as: "the combined works of nature and man". It is a broad term encompassing "landscapes, historic places, sites and built environments" as well as recording the "long processes of historic development" which contribute to a sense of identity at a national, regional or local level. (ICOMOS Cultural Tourism Charter, 1999).

A cultural landscape expresses modification to a landscape. It therefore includes both "built" townscape evolution, and historic modifications to landscapes, through land uses like agriculture. Historic vegetation is an intrinsic and highly visible part of the cultural landscape illustrating the value and intentions of those who planted it. The following are examples of types of cultural landscapes and historic vegetation, which have over time become valuable to various communities in different ways:

- Avenues, squares and parks surrounded and defined by historic trees often reflect old settlement and planting patterns and have enduring cultural value to the local communities.
- Designed and formal gardens.
- Places and vegetation of symbolic value, i.e. slave tree.
- Groups of trees planted for shade or as windbreaks and old water courses often reflect historic agricultural activity and provide historic depth to environments.
- Historic domestic architecture and gardens.
- Built environments that respond and draw aesthetic value from their landscape contexts.
- "Buffer strips" which were planned to keep communities of different cultural groups separated, display strong characteristics of social and political power relationships.

## LOCAL EXAMPLES OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

The Cape is blessed with a rich scenic, natural context, which together with the variety of patterns of historic settlement create a cultural landscape of scenic drama and historical interest. A cultural landscape contains a relationship between the built and the "natural" modifications. The following are examples of environments that contribute to this landscape:

- Designed landscapes: Rhodes Estate, Devil's Peak
- Historic and designed domestic gardens: Welgelegen, Mowbray
- Trees, historic amenity spaces: The Glen, Camps Bay
- Wetlands used for amenity purposes: Khayelitsha Wetlands
- Historic water channels and watercourses: Government Avenue, the Company's Garden, CBD
- Significant avenues of trees: Rosemead Avenue, Kenilworth
- Historic settlements, forms and agricultural patterns: Rural Philippi
- Scenic routes and areas of outstanding cultural value: Boyes Drive, Kalk Bay
- Promenades: Gordon's Bay

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TREES AND VEGETATION

Deliberately planted vegetation is an integral part of the cultural landscape. Different cultures have had different cultural, aesthetics, use and amenity requirements and this is reflected in the different trees, patterns and historic vegetation which were planted over time. Many trees planted in historic areas were exotic trees that prospered in a Mediterranean climate, like stone pines and oak trees. The hybrid or composite qualities of historic vegetation and indigenous vegetation enriches the unique Cape cultural landscape.

Existing mature trees and vegetation in Cape Town, particularly in Heritage Areas need care and proper management to ensure protection and conservation. Besides their cultural and historic value, mature trees have much to offer in that they:

- Provide shade.
- Soften the urban landscape and provide a human scale.
- Define urban space, provide focal points and define urban spaces.
- Create memorable places and spaces.
- Provide a habitat and food for urban wildlife.
- Support outdoor recreational activity and promote health and well-being.
- Create aesthetic pleasure and reflect the changing seasons.
- Have symbolic and/or landmark significance.
- May form part of cultural and religious rituals.
- Provide a filter for air and noise pollution.
- Promote tourism by beautifying scenic routes and thoroughfares to the City and inside the City.
- Promote investment by upgrading and improving the urban environment.
- Provide scientific interest, i.e. rarity.

Trees in particular increase in significance when they:

- Are very old and rare
- Have large canopies and trunks
- Are associated with important people or events
- Define historic settlement or movement patterns
- Are non-invasive

## REGULATIONS PROTECTING TREES

Mature trees and vegetation are a heritage resource which can be protected by law at local, provincial and national levels:

- At local level, the Zoning Schemes applicable to particular parts of the City define property rights and areas of special character. In certain areas the Zoning Scheme provides for the management of new development work, alterations and additions to the built fabric as well as the protection of mature trees and hedges.

- At local, provincial and national level, the National Heritage Resources Act (No. 25 of 1999) provides for the conservation and management of heritage resources and empowers society to assist in this management. This Act is administered by the South African Heritage Resource Agency (SAHRA) at national level and Heritage Western Cape (HWC) at provincial level. Local heritage areas and related aspects of heritage resources are administered by the City of Cape Town. Milkwood trees are protected by Section 15(1) of the National Forest Act (No. 122 of 1984) which is administered by the Department of Water Affairs.

In terms of the above protection mechanisms, all trees in all heritage areas are protected where they are significant to the context of historic buildings or to the character of an area. Trees which are protected include exotic non-invasive trees.

The Conservation of Agricultural Resources Act (No. 43 of 1983), and the Environmental Conservation Act (No. 73 of 1989) provide for the protection of the natural environment including ecosystems and green spaces within the urban environment.